

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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November 21, 2011

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier, Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing  
State Capitol, Room 2209  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator DeSaulnier:

Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee regarding the recent report of falsified foundation pile tests by a Caltrans transportation engineering technician. We have assembled the enclosed documents for your review.

Through a series of internal and external investigations, we have confirmed that the totality of the problem regarding falsified data is limited to one transportation technician's work in three locations: the La Sierra Avenue Overhead Bridge in Riverside, where falsification was discovered during construction and the structure was retested and found to be safe; a retaining wall at Braddock Drive on Interstate 405 in Los Angeles; and an overhead sign foundation on Interstate 580 in Oakland.

The enclosed documents include technical information regarding these three locations. These documents also confirm that after the falsification was discovered, Caltrans performed an engineering analysis to ensure that each location is structurally safe. Investigations conducted by Caltrans engineers, Caltrans' Division of Audits and Investigations, the Federal Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have concluded that these locations are the only sites in which data was falsified.

The test in question is a gamma-gamma logging (GGL) test that is performed at the end of the piles' construction to confirm there are no unacceptable anomalies. This verification test is only one of many quality control elements. The overall quality control effort consists of a substantial number of measures throughout the design and construction process that, in combination, ensure the integrity of structures.

Although much attention has been given to the self-anchored suspension of the Bay Bridge replacement project, no tests were ever falsified for any of the Bay Bridge's tower foundation piles. This has been confirmed by both state and federal investigations.

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When the technician in question was caught for falsifying data on the three structures, Caltrans reviewed all of the work on all of the Bay Bridge piles. We found no evidence of falsification, and this was later reconfirmed by the federal investigation. A second quality control test called a cross-hole sonic logging (CSL) test also verified that the piles are structurally sound. All of this data is available for your review. The bridge's foundations are designed with numerous redundancies, and an unusually high standard of safety needed to meet earthquake standards for the new bridge.

We are taking additional measures to ensure public safety. The Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee, of which Caltrans is a member, has asked its Expert Peer Review Panel to examine all Bay Bridge foundation records to further confirm the safety of the bridge.

The actions of this employee and his supervisor, who were both terminated, were unacceptable and reprehensible. Better controls should have been in place at that time to prevent such activities. Documentation should have been more thorough and timely, and remedial action should have been swifter. We have taken measures to ensure stronger processes are in place as we go forward to prevent data falsification from happening again. Procedures have been changed for the GGL testing to prevent falsification from occurring in the future, and a third party review of the Foundation Testing Branch has been initiated to verify adequate controls, practices and procedures are always in place.

The binder includes a timeline describing the series of events, including when the falsifications occurred, when they were discovered, the time of each investigation, and action taken against the transportation technician. I thank you again for the opportunity to present this information and to address your committee personally.

Sincerely,



MALCOLM DOUGHERTY  
Acting Director

Enclosure